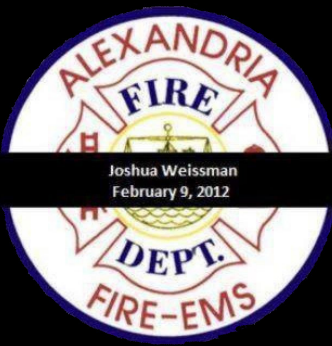


DEDICATED TO OUR COMMUNITY, OUR PROFESSION AND EACH OTHER

Spring 2012



Joshua Weissman
February 9, 2012

THE RESPONDER

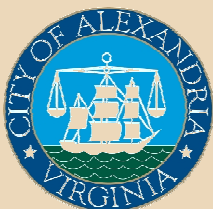
Losing Our Own

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This newsletter is written and
compiled by:
Alexandria Fire Department's
Community Services Unit

On the web!
www.alexandriava.gov/fire



No matter whom you are in public safety; a firefighter; a fire marshal; a medic; a police officer; or a sheriff; each day could be your last. It is a fact. It is the nature of the work we do. It is the sacrifice we have agreed to make by signing on to the role we have. Our training focuses on preventing that to the greatest extent possible. We train with an emphasis on safety every day. And each one of us goes about our business not thinking this will be our last day. We are often thinking about what we will be doing tomorrow, or the next day, or the day after that. And when we see a loss happen to another Department our hearts go out to them and we offer our support in any way we can. However, when it happens to one of our own, like it did on February 8, 2012, it is a completely different situation.

February 8 was no different than any other day. There were no major incidents for the majority of the day. But that changed at 6:18pm. A 9-11 call was received and dispatched for a vehicle fire on Interstate 395 in the High Occupancy Vehicle lanes. The caller also reported that the vehicle was still occupied. Alexandria units, including Medic 206 were dispatched to the incident. Arlington County also received a similar call and was responding as well. Medic 206 with Paramedic Joshua Weissman on board was the first

unit to arrive on the scene. Shortly after Medic 206's arrival Weissman exited the ambulance and was headed across the highway to check on the vehicle on fire. It was then that he fell through an opening between two bridge spans and landed 30 feet below next to Four Mile Run



Medic II Joshua A. Weissman

creek. Weissman's partner quickly notified responding units of what happened and additional resources were dispatched. The incident now elevated to a technical rescue as well as an auto fire. Arriving units from Alexandria and Arlington County quickly assembled and began setting up to rescue Weissman who was unconscious. A stokes basket

operation was initiated and after being treated on the creek bed below, Weissman was raised up to the highway where he was quickly placed in an Arlington County medic unit and transported to Washington Hospital Center.

At the hospital, doctors worked to treat Weissman's injuries, which were classified as critical. Firefighters and medics began to gather at the hospital as word of Josh's injury spread. Fire Chief Adam Thiel arrived shortly after the medic unit and remained at the hospital as he and other staff members made notifications to Weissman's family.

As the evening drew on it became apparent that Josh would not survive his injuries. Arrangements were made to transport as many Department members to the hospital as possible to see Josh. A call was also made to the National Capital Region's Incident Management Team (IMT) requesting their assistance in the days ahead. On February 9 at 4:25pm Josh succumb to his injuries and the Department suffered its first traumatic injury Line of Duty Death in almost 90 years.

SEE LOSS, PAGE 4, COL. 1

Fire News

On January 24 the Department celebrated the inauguration of four-person minimum staffing within the Alexandria Fire Department. The ceremony was held at Fire Station 201 in Old Town. Members of City Council, City Department Heads and members of the Department gathered to celebrate this historic occasion.

tigation and analysis. Mr. Routley was tasked with performing a comprehensive analysis of the fire and to provide a report on his findings. The "Routley Report" was issued in November 2007 which included 21 recommendations, one of which was the implementation of four-person minimum staffing on all fire apparatus.

FEMA subsequently authorized the Department to combine the two grants into a single grant for 12 positions. In July 2011 those 12 firefighters along with others hired to replace positions vacated through attrition began their formal training at the Department's Professional Development Center. In December 2011, those firefighters graduated and began serving in Alexandria Fire Stations. The four engine companies who increased to four-person minimum staffing on January 21, 2012 were Engines 201, 205, 206 and 207.



Fire Chief Adam Thiel thanks the Mayor and members of Council for their support in making four-person minimum staffing a reality for four of the City's eight engine companies.

In March 2008 the Mayor and Council were presented the report. Further discussion followed during the April 2008 Budget Work Session on Public Safety. The Council endorsed the Routley Report findings which commenced in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 with the funding of three shift safety officer positions, another Routley Report recommendation.

The kick-off of the Department's four-person minimum staffing program begins to align the Department with a nationwide and region-wide staffing standard promulgated by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Studies of fire department staffing levels have concluded that such an increase can significantly reduce the number and severity of firefighter injuries which can be more costly to a Department's budget than staffing levels alone. The implementation of the four-person minimum staffing plan is a start

The history of four-person staffing began back in August of 2007 with a fire at the Alexandria Knolls West condominiums on Edsall Road. In that incident, the Department responded to a multiple alarm fire in a high rise building which was the result of a lightning strike during a severe thunderstorm. Fire was reported on the roof, 15th floor, 8th floor and basement electrical room. The building was without power or elevator service. Arriving firefighters were challenged with building evacuations and fighting multiple fires on several levels of the structure. The incident injured six firefighters, three of which were hospitalized for several days, one of whom was admitted to intensive care. After that incident the City retained J. Gordon Routley, a nationally recognized expert in fire inves-

In June 2008 the Mayor and Council authorized the Department to apply to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant to commence the four-person staffing for one engine company (hiring 3 firefighters). In November 2009 the Mayor and Council authorized the Department to apply for a second SAFER grant to hire an additional nine firefighters to bring three additional engine companies up to four-person staffing.



Vice Mayor Kerry J. Donley speaks about the significance of four-person staffing and the Council's commitment to public safety.

to providing City residents, workers, and visitors with an enhanced fire response capability to protect lives and property in the City of Alexandria. 🚒

EMS News

Alexandria Fire Gets New Mini Ambulance



Alexandria's new mini-ambulance, known as ATV201 is housed at Fire Station 201 in Old Town and is capable of responding onto the pedestrian walkway of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to treat and transport patients that are inaccessible from the main highway.

At the end of 2011 the Alexandria Fire Department received delivery of a mini-ambulance from Alternate Support Apparatus of Midvale, Ohio. The unit is built on a Polaris ATV chassis and is designed to provide emergency medical assistance in limited access areas such as pedestrian walkways or areas where traditional ambulances cannot operate.

The vehicle was purchased through a Rescue Fund Assistance Grant awarded by the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services. The vehicle, known as ATV201, is located at the Prince Street fire station. Its primary mission is to provide medical support for incidents that occur on the pedestrian walkway of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. It will also be avail-

able at numerous outdoor City special events.

The unit is not staffed; but in the event of an emergency, the nearest fire company will respond; pick up the vehicle; and drive it to the incident scene. From there paramedics will use



EMS Supervisor John Rule and Firefighter Jeffery Harrison, Jr. take ATV201 for a spin during one of many training sessions held by the Department.

the vehicle to access the victims of a medical emergency and transport them back to a waiting ambulance.

Fire Department staff spent several weeks rotating staff through Station 201 for training on the new vehicle during the month of January. The vehicle went in service on February 1st. 🚑

FIRE ADMINISTRATION NEWS

On January 20 the Fire Department underwent a reorganization within several sections. With the departure of Assistant Chief Jeff Lindsey in December 2011, the Department decided to restructure the command staff for Fire Emergency Services, Emergency Medical Services and the Administrative Services Section. Fire Emergency Services and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were reorganized to report to a single Assistant Fire Chief. Assistant Chief Andrew Snead will oversee both Fire and EMS operations. The Peak Time EMS Supervisor (EMS 233) was reassigned to provide administrative support to the EMS Operations Manager.

The position of Assistant Fire Chief held by Chief Lindsey was reclassified to a Battalion Chief and assigned to oversee Logistics for the Department. This position oversees the management of the Fire Maintenance Shop, Fire Department Facilities and Supply and functions as the liaison to the Department of Emergency Communications. Battalion Chief North will assume the role of the Logistics Chief.

Special Operations now falls under Battalion Chief Michael Cross who will oversee the Marine Operations Team, the Hazardous Materials Team and the Technical Rescue Team as well as all associated training and certification requirements associated with each of those positions.

These changes are designed to aid the Department in becoming a more effective and efficient organization. 🚒

Loss, From Page 1.

In the days that followed many things happened at once. First was to take care of the family and AFD members. Because Alexandria is a small department, there was hardly anyone who did not work with or know Josh. As a result, Josh's death had a significant impact on a large number of Department members. The City and the Department came together to take care of the family's needs and counseling services were made available to all Department members.



IMT Team members worked tirelessly to aid Alexandria in planning the multiple events and activities associated with Medic Weissman's Line of Duty Death funeral service.

Second was dealing with the Line of Duty Death (LODD). Josh's death put into motion a series of investigations at the Federal, State and local level. Battalion Chief Jeff Merryman and members of the Department's Health and Safety Unit

were put in charge of coordination and distribution of information to each of the investigating agencies as well as being responsible for conducting the Department's own internal accident investigation. Besides the investigations, there was the issue surrounding the LODD funeral. LODD funerals are significant events in and of themselves which require substantial resources to coordinate and facilitate the arrival of thousands of firefighters, medics and law enforcement personnel from all over the country.

Third was dealing with the media as it related to the initial accident; subsequent death; background stories; and the funeral. An LODD generates an enormous amount of media interest locally and nationally.

To aid in all of the above, the IMT arrived on February 9 to assist the Department. The IMT is staffed by public safety professionals from all over the National Capital Area. They function behind the scenes to aid Departments in a number of large scale incidents including LODD cases. They partner with each jurisdiction and work with them to produce a good work product. In the case of Josh's death, the IMT was tasked with assisting the Department with planning and staffing the following:

- Return of the body;
- Fill in companies for 48 hours;
- Visitation;
- Funeral;
- Repast.

The IMT and AFD members worked together for many long days and nights to plan and prepare Incident Action Plans (IAP) for each phase of the funeral pro-

cess. City staff from all departments came together to assist in the planning and implementation of the funeral. Many issues including street closures, traffic impact, media coverage, outside department coordination, site coordination for the Visitation and Funeral as well as the needs of the family and the Department were broken down into tasks and worked on with the results combined into one of several IAPs.



During the Visitation public safety personnel, healthcare providers and the public lined up around the funeral home to pay their respects.

The Visitation was held on the evening of February 15 and ran from 6pm until midnight. Hundreds of public safety providers, retirees, healthcare providers and the general public came out to pay their respects. The line ran around the Everly-Wheatley Funeral Home on West Braddock Road most of the evening. The weather was clear and calm.



Medic II Joshua Weissman arrives at the Everly - Wheatly Funeral home escorted by the Department's Honor Guard.

On February 16 thousands gathered along Seminary Road to pay their respects to Josh. Fire and EMS equipment from all over the region and from out of state lined both sides of the street. A sea of blue uniforms and Department colors formed up to the Beth El Hebrew Congregation for about five blocks. Two aerial trucks raised their ladders and hung a large American Flag over the roadway. The entire Alexandria Fire Department marched in procession up Seminary Road to Beth El Hebrew Con-



The Alexandria Fire Department marches as one up Seminary Road towards the Beth El Hebrew Congregation where services were held for Medic II Joshua Weissman. Weissman's body is carried on Engine 207 in the background.

gregation led by 150 bag pipes and drums. Josh, in a flag draped coffin road in the hose bed of Engine 207 led by his medic unit (Medic 206), and followed by a DC Fire ambulance, and an Ithaca New York Ambulance. Each vehicle signified a portion of Josh's public safety life.

The service was a traditional Jewish service with Fire Department traditions added. Josh's life was highlighted including his dedication to his family, his community, his department and his fellow employees.



A sea of Colors and Honor Guards line up in front of Beth El Hebrew Congregation.

From the service, the procession proceeded up Seminary Road to Fire Station 206 which was Josh's last duty assignment. From there it proceeded back down King Street to Ivy Hill Cemetery where services for Josh were held in the Circle of Honor, a special place reserved for Alexandria Fire Department members and their families. It was the first time the Circle of Honor had been used for a Line of Duty Death since its dedication 32 years before. A light rain fell as the procession arrived. The family and the casket were escorted to a covered tent where the burial service was held. A bell was rung for the Return to Quarters as well as the playing of Taps. At the end of the service a fly over by Medstar Helicopter 1 was a fitting tribute to the life of public service Josh was dedicated to.

The Department returned back to normal operations on the

evening of February 17. Much of what occurred to make Josh's funeral possible would not have been a reality without the out pouring of assistance by the City, the community, our surrounding jurisdictions, and the IMT. The IMT was an invaluable asset. They dedicated a total of 2,885 work hours in the IMT as well as 1,168 work hours by other non IMT members for a total of 4,053 hours of donated time or \$235,000 in donated wages to make Josh's final days run smoothly.

The Department still remembers Josh every day. The impact of losing one of your own is not easily forgotten by many, and never forgotten by the few closest to him personally and with him on that tragic night on February 8. The one thing many have promised since Josh's death is to live by his example and be dedicated to our profession, our community and each other. 🚒



Above and Below: Alexandria Fire Department personnel and other public safety representatives salute as Medic II Joshua Weissman's body is brought to Ivy Hill Cemetery.



IAFF President Visits Alexandria Fire Department



IAFF General President Harold A. Schaitberger (l), Alexandria IAFF Local President David Denardo (c), Fire Chief Adam Thiel (r), and Firefighter Kenneth Salfelder (rear) tour Alexandria fire equipment and talk about firefighter health and safety initiatives implemented by the Alexandria Fire Department.

The Alexandria Fire Department was notified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on March 11, 2011 of award of a \$1.6 million grant to hire and train twelve new fire-

past year. The following members were recognized for promotions and awards:

Manuel Herrera, HR Manager I to HR Manager II; James Lynch, Division Chief to Fiscal Officer III; Patsieann Misiti, Outreach Specialist to Community Education Specialist; Ashley Ehrhart, Emergency Management Planner to Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator; Kelsea Bonkoski, Michael Cahill, Michael Gerber, Bryan Meckes, and John Rule, Paramedic to EMS Supervisor; Michael Cross, Jeffrey Merryman, John Morehead, and Michael Sharpe, Fire Captain to Battalion Chief; Gregory Cook, Matthew Craig, David Denardo, Michael Dunn, John Harris, Jack Hoffman, Douglas Jackson, Anthony Kelly, Timothy Kunkle, Larry Lee, David Lukes, Patrick Lyon, Gregory Nichols, David Plunkett, Fred Ruff, John Silverwood, Louis Simpson, James Taylor and Wells Wilson, Firefighter to Lieutenant; Andrea Buchanan, Assistant Fire Marshal, Officer of the Year; Patrick Evans, Firefighter of the Year; Joshua Weissman, EMS Provider of the Year; Gary Tobias, Recruitment Manager, Administrative Employee of the Year; Maurice Jones, FPS Supervisor, Inspector of the Year; Tony Menjivar, Fire Marshal of the Year; Bill Kehoe, Volunteer of the Year; Ashley Ehrhart, Emergency Manager of the Year; Patrick Lyon, Michael Chandler, Louis Simpson and Joseph Porcelli, Unit Citation of the Year— Truck 208B;

Recognition of Meritorious Service— September 8, 2011: John Catlett, Director, Code Administration, Dana Lawhorne, Sheriff, Chris O'Dell, Deputy Sheriff, Monica Lisle, Sergeant, Police, Jeffrey Merryman, Battalion Chief Robert Robinson, Capt., Lonnie Phillips, EMS Sup., Phillip Perry, Capt., Samuel Parker, Capt., Charles Davis, Jr., Lt., Anthony Casalena, Capt., David Bogoz,

Harold A. Schaitberger, General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), representing more than 298,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel in every state in the U.S. and in Canada, visited Alexandria Firefighters and Medics at Alexandria Fire Station 206 on January 17. President Schaitberger dined with IAFF members as well as City Manager Rashad Young, Fire Chief Adam Thiel and members of the Department's Executive Team.

During his two hour visit, President Schaitberger spoke about the number of health and safety initiatives the IAFF is working on for firefighters across the nation. He also discussed a number of IAFF investments in research for firefighter health and safety.

President Schaitberger recognized a number of health and safety initiatives implemented by the Alexandria Fire Department. Of note, he acknowledged the recent deployment of four-person staffing on four of the City's eight Engine Companies.

fighters. The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant was awarded to Alexandria after an extensive nationwide competitive review process. The twelve firefighters graduated from the Department's Fire Academy on December 8, 2011 and are now assigned to City Fire Stations. 🚒

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) presented four members of the Alexandria Fire Department awards as part of the 2011-12 SAR Public Service and Heroism Awards. Fire Protection Systems Engineer Maurice Jones and Acting Lieutenant Samuel Reyes received the Fire Safety Commendation Award. EMS Supervisors Ray Whatley and Jeff Woolsey received the Emergency Medical Services Commendation Medal. Congratulations to all four members for their recognition of service to their profession.

On March 19 the Department held its annual Recognition, Retirement and Promotional Ceremony at the George Washington Masonic Temple. Sixteen members were recognized for retiring in the

Spring 2012 Run Statistics (January through March 2012)

	Unit	EMS	SUP	TOTAL	Current Yr	Previous Yr
Station 201	E201	136	208	344	344	1376
Station 202	M202	389	109	498	498	2113
	U202	3	11	14	14	55
Total		392	120	512	512	2168
Station 203	E203	126	144	270	270	1178
	T203	0	0	0	0	1028
Total		126	144	270	270	2206
Station 204	E204	163	175	338	338	1529
	T204	32	354	386	386	1428
Total		195	529	724	724	2957
Station 205	E205	200	295	495	495	2087
	M205	545	141	686	686	2769
Total		745	436	1181	1181	4856
Station 206	E206	283	285	568	568	1921
	M206	507	104	611	611	2734
	R206	95	162	257	257	616
Total		885	551	1436	1436	5271
Station 207	E207	231	226	457	457	2004
	M207	488	112	600	600	2396
Total		719	338	1057	1057	4400
Station 208	E208	330	338	668	668	2752
	M208	528	151	679	679	2817
	T208	59	341	400	400	1634
Total		917	830	1747	1747	7203
Station 209	E209	150	154	304	304	1365
	H209	0	8	8	8	63
	S209	5	134	139	139	526
Total		155	296	451	451	1954
Peak Time Medics	M213	37	5	42	42	443
	M214	221	57	278	278	576
Total		258	62	320	320	1019
Station totals		4528	3514	8042	8042	33410

Lt., Matthew Craig, Lt., Michael Dunn, Lt., Robert Townsend, III, FF, John Shaffer, FF, William Dunleavy, FF, Rachel Grayson, FF, James Jackson, FF, Randolph Woodson, III, FF, Warner Sherman, FF, Tyler Degenhardt, FF, Christopher Smith, FF, Kenneth Salfelder, FF, Stuart Smothers, FF, Timothy Malanka, Medic, Cliff Krieg, Medic, Johnny McCarther, Medic, Bri-

anne Barbour, Medic, Thurston McClain, Capt. Byron Andrews, Capt., Wayne Bryant, Capt., Daniel Townsend, Lt., Ricky Muse, Jr., FF, Dale Barr, FF, Patrick Evans, FF, David Stelter, FF, Daniel Grayson, FF, Lydia Majak, FF, Michael Brown, Battalion Chief, Patrick Lyon, Lt., Louis Simpson, Lt., Michael Chandler, FF, Joseph Porcelli, FF, Steven Boyer, Medic, Fiona

Apple, Medic, Michael Keske, Supervisor, Linda Garcia, Disp., Tikisha Monagan, Disp., Mark Penn, Em.Mgmt. Coord., Ashley Ehrhart, Assist. Coord., Paul Scaffido, Em. Mgmt. Planner.

Congratulations to everyone recognized at this event. 🚒

HOT Shots



Fire and EMS personnel along with Fireboat 201 respond to Marina Drive for a report of a boater in distress. #11-15370



Alexandria firefighters assisted by Fairfax County extinguish a laundry room fire on Sheffield Court. #11-17855



Firefighters investigate smoke in the building on Four Mile Run Drive. #11-15077



Some of Alexandria's finest fire marshals support the cause to find a cure for breast cancer.



Firefighters overhaul the remains of a balcony fire on South Pickett Street. #12-01305.



Fire and EMS crews work to extricate patients trapped in an overturned vehicle on Russell Road. #12-00595